SYLLABUS  
ANTH 4210.001  
CULTURE AND HUMAN SEXUALITY  
SPRING 2023

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Class meetings: Tu/Th 3:30- 4:50  
Meeting location: WH 316

COURSE DESCRIPTION  
Welcome! In this class, we will learn about the history of the study of sexuality in anthropology, with particular attention to significant debates, interventions, and lessons that have informed the development of anthropological perspectives on sexuality and the current field of queer anthropology. We will examine a variety of interdisciplinary texts to understand and problematize the ways in which culturally specific norms around gender, sex, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, class, and more intersect with and inform the experience we call “sexuality.” In particular, we will examine in-depth taxonomies and hierarchies of gender, sex, and sexuality in the West, and we will study how knowledge about sexual and gendered difference is produced through a variety of discursive contexts, including science, medicine, and the law. We also utilize a cross-cultural perspective to consider cultural meanings about gender and sexuality outside “the West.” In doing so, we will evaluate the variety of meanings and expressions of gender and sexuality within and across cultures.

COURSE OBJECTIVES  
After completing this course, you will be able to:
• Identify and explain the history and significance of the study of sexuality in anthropology  
• Evaluate the variety of meanings about gender and sexual differences across and within cultures  
• Critically analyze the relationship between sexual difference, knowledge production, and structures of power  
• Analyze and explain how norms about gender, sex, and sexuality are constructed, reproduced, and contested.
• Utilize a queer anthropological approach to gender and sexuality in your own work and lives
• Research and critically analyze digital archives related to gender, sex, and sexuality

**REQUIRED TEXT**
There is one required text for this course, which is available as an e-book through the UNT Library or for purchase at the UNT Bookstore. It is “Queer: A Graphic History” by Dr. Meg-John Barker (referred to as QGH throughout the schedule). All other required readings will be available for your downloading pleasure through our Canvas course webpage.

**COURSE INFORMATION AND EXPECTATIONS**

**Names and Pronouns:** I will gladly honor your request to call you by a name that differs from school records as well as whatever pronouns you use. I also understand that we grow and change in how we understand ourselves, therefore appropriate name and pronouns can change during the semester. So, please advise me of how to address you whenever you feel comfortable, safe, and ready to do so. You can add pronouns to your Canvas account here [https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-select-personal-pronouns-in-my-user-account-as-a/t-p/456](https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-select-personal-pronouns-in-my-user-account-as-a/t-p/456). The Pride Alliance office at UNT also offers support and information regarding communication about your name or pronouns.

**General Information:** This course requires considerable reading and writing. Although you do not need a background in anthropological theory or gender studies to succeed in the class, you will be expected to grapple with difficult texts that you may need to re-read and sit with to fully understand. In other words, cursory readings will not be sufficient.

In addition, given the political and personal nature of some of the course content, it is important that our class participation maintains respect for the many diverse perspectives and interpretations our classroom holds. As you participate remember that some topics may be sensitive to class members or cause discomfort. Strive for thoughtful discussion and conversation; aggressive or personally directed remarks make the classroom unsuitable for learning.

Note that I do not expect you to agree with all of the perspectives or course materials in order to do well in this class, but I do expect you to approach these topics in an open and intellectual fashion. Feel free to attend office hours (or make an appointment) to share and discuss questions, concerns, or insights about the course or course material.

**Class Participation:** This class relies on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. This goes beyond merely showing up for class, and includes but is not limited to: responding to discussion questions that I pose to the class, asking your own questions for clarification, and respectfully responding to classmates’ discussion points if relevant. In order for you to participate, you need to have completed the reading assignment for that day and be ready to talk about it in class. You should bring assigned readings to class each day as we will refer to and utilize them throughout our meetings.
**What it Means to Read:** In completing the readings, I expect that you read the texts critically. This does not mean trying to find fault with the text, but rather to approach each assigned reading by considering the assumptions, claims, and conclusions of the authors. In other words, I expect you to derive from your reading not only the basic content of the materials, but also the ways in which these authors understand and work with broader concepts relevant to this course (i.e. "sex," "gender," and "sexuality;" as well as "identity," "subjectivity," "power" etc.) As the semester progresses, you will be encouraged to put different readings in conversation with each other. As such, my strong suggestion is that you take notes on the materials you read to aid you in this task.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late quizzes, tests, assignments, or papers unless you have made specific arrangements with me in advance, have a doctor’s note, and/or have otherwise received my approval. That being said, if you realize you are going to have difficulty meeting a deadline, I am often willing to work with you to give you extra time if you contact me in advance to make arrangements.

**Extra Credit:** Extra credit can be earned at any point during the semester. I will suggest several opportunities in class, and I am relatively open to creative suggestions from you about extra credit options. For example, ways to earn extra credit might include: completing a relevant movie/documentary analysis, writing a summary/response to a related talk/lecture (on or off campus), a personal reflection that puts course content in conversation with an experience you have had, or developing a creative piece such as poetry or artwork. You must get approval from me ahead of time for your choice, so check with me before you do the work.

**Electronics in the Classroom:** Please turn off your cell phone ringer/vibration prior to coming to class. Students may use laptop computers to take notes and for class purposes only; students checking email, using Facebook, etc. will be asked to turn off their computers and will not be allowed to use their computers in subsequent classes. Wearing ear buds or headphones during class is not allowed, unless special permission is given by the professor.

**Academic Honesty:** UNT and the Department of Anthropology do not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or helping others to cheat. For this class, writing assignments will be submitted through Turnitin, a Web based resource that compares the text of student papers to an extensive electronic database. This means that your assignment will be compared to a database containing published writings, online content, papers turned in by students at UNT and other universities, and more.

- Cheating includes the physical or electronic **distribution or use** of answers for graded components, such as discussion posts, writing assignments, and exams.
- Plagiarism is defined as misrepresenting the work of others (whether published or not) as your own.
- Plagiarism may be inadvertent or intentional. **That is, plagiarism is still plagiarism even if you “didn't mean to do it.”** Any facts, statistics, quotations, or paraphrasing of any information that is not common knowledge should be cited.
Students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism will receive an automatic zero on the assessment. I also reserve the right to pursue further disciplinary action within the UNT system. Students will be provided the opportunity for a hearing; if found guilty they can receive an automatic “F” in the course. Multiple violations may result in dismissal from the university.

For more information on paper writing, including how to avoid plagiarism, and how to use citations, see http://www.unt.edu/anthropology/writing.htm. For information on the University’s policies regarding academic integrity and dishonesty, see the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, http://www.unt.edu/csrr/.

Two more points about this: A) Just don’t do it. We use Turnitin in this class, and even without that I will likely be able to tell if the writing is not yours. It is better to talk with me about why the assignment is not complete, or to ask for help on in-text citations, rather than passing off someone else’s work as your own. B) This is also an issue of a politics of citation. When you represent someone else’s thoughts/writing as your own, you are denying them credit for their intellectual work. Especially when authors are women, persons of color, queer, and/or are born outside the United States and Europe, plagiarism is yet another way in which these voices are marginalized within the western academy. Actions have meaning. Please cite your sources.

Academic Accommodations: The University of North Texas is committed to providing accommodation for all students with disabilities. If you have or acquire a disability that may affect your participation in class, I will strive to accommodate your needs. To ensure that the necessary accommodations are made, be sure to contact the Office of Disability Accommodation (located in Sage Hall) as soon as possible to ensure your needs are met in a timely manner. They will work with both of us to ensure proper accommodations are made. If you need accommodations, please remember that reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Office of Disability Accommodation. Note that students need to obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

STUDENT RESOURCES
Basic Needs: You can’t learn if you are hungry! UNT has a Food Pantry on campus. Any current UNT student in need can visit the UNT Food Pantry 8am-6pm Monday-Thursday and 8pm-5pm on Fridays. Students will check-in at the Dean of Students Office front desk in the Union, Suite 409. Students may go directly to room 366 from 5PM-6PM, Monday-Thursday. Students who visit the food pantry can request to meet with a staff member to discuss any difficulties they may be facing during the hours of 8am-5pm. When appropriate, referral to additional campus and/or community resources will be made. The Dean of Students Office has established protocols that allow for student confidentiality and dignity to be maintained. In addition, there is a pantry located at the Discovery Park Location in the Engineering Library (M130) next to the Career Center, as well as a Food
Pantry located at UNT’s Frisco campus, which can be accessed by visiting the information desk.

**UNT Learning Center:** This resource provides a variety of tutoring services that are open to students for different topics, including one-on-one and group sessions. Check out their website for more information here: [https://learningcenter.unt.edu/tutoring](https://learningcenter.unt.edu/tutoring)

**UNT Writing Center:** The Writing Center provides assistance with any academic writing needs. If you are having troubles with organizing your thoughts, articulating your argument, or just want assistance with in-text citations, this is the resource for you. Find more about their services here: [https://writingcenter.unt.edu](https://writingcenter.unt.edu)

**Emergency Notification and Procedures:** UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

I. Participation Grade 100 points

II. Weekly Discussion Questions 300 points

III. Politics of Representation Presentation 150 points

IV. Reflection Paper 150 points

V. Archive/Digital Exhibit Project 300 points
   a. Proposal (100 points)
   b. Exhibit and Analysis (20 points)

**I. Participation Grade (100 points)**
The depth of knowledge produced and learned in this class is dependent on the intellectual commitment and active participation of all students. Active participation goes beyond merely showing up for class, and includes but is not limited to: participating in group work, responding to discussion questions that I pose to the class, asking your own questions for clarification, and respectfully responding to classmates’ discussion points if relevant. In order for you to participate, you need to have completed the reading assignment for that day and be ready to talk about it in class. To encourage participation, there will be two participation grades assessed- 50 points at the mid-term and 50 points at the end of the class.

**II. Weekly Summary and Discussion Questions (300 points)**
Discussion is a crucial component of our meetings. In order to participate in the discussion, you need to come to class having read the assigned readings. As a reward to you for reading, you will be able to earn points by raising one original, substantial, and thought-provoking Discussion Question pertaining to each week’s
readings and topics. I will utilize the most pertinent discussion questions in our class to help prompt and guide our conversations.

Your original, substantive, and thought-provoking Weekly Summary and Discussion Question should focus on one assigned reading each week. That being said, I encourage you to put the assigned reading in conversation with other assigned readings or current events. The goal of this assignment is to encourage deeper engagement with the text in question and the points the author is making.

You should submit one discussion question each week by 11AM on the day of the class that the related reading is assigned, for a total of 11 submissions. Each Summary and Discussion Question is worth 30 points, and I will drop the lowest score of one submission. Late discussion questions will not be accepted without proper documentation.

Each submission should be approximately 200-250 words.

In order to earn all of the points, your Summary and Discussion Question should contain:

A. Brief Summary of the Reading (12 points)
   1. Include a general discussion of the article/chapter’s content
   2. Identify significant terms or concepts used by the author
   3. Discuss the argument(s) being made by the author

B. Relevant Quote (6 points)
   1. Include at least one relevant quote from the reading that you think speaks to the main points the author is making

C. Discussion Question (12 points)
   1. Create a discussion question that focuses on the reading. The audience for your discussion question will be your classmates. Keep in mind the best discussion questions will be:
      a. Open-ended- Questions cannot be answered with yes/no or either/or
      b. Answerable- Questions do not require extensive knowledge from outside the course, and can be answered using knowledge/experience versus speculation
      c. Substantive and relevant- Questions should be related to a significant point/argument in the reading, and should ask us to consider the point/argument in the context of the themes of this course.

III. Politics of Representation Presentation (150 points)
As a means to kick off our course meetings with student leadership, and to provide an opportunity for you to put the concepts and ideas we are learning in class in conversation with events and issues in our society today, you and a classmate will research and present a report about a current, relevant form of representation that deals with gender, sex, and/or sexuality. In the report, you will consider how gender, sex, and/or sexuality gets represented in the source of your choosing. For
example, you may want to think about film, television, news media, social media, art work/artist, music, or some other site, and consider how it represents sexuality and/or gender. Go beyond good/bad dichotomies and consider what meanings different audiences might take away.

Be creative! For this presentation, I would like for you to focus in on one specific example—for instance, not a whole genre (i.e. graphic novels) but one specific case (i.e. the graphic novel series “Sandman”) to do a “deep reading” of that site, and to think more in-depth about the cultural meanings about gender and sexuality that are produced and circulated by and through that site. In your presentation, you will analyze both the substantive content of the text, and identify how it represents bodies, relationships, and/or politics in relation to cultural norms about gender, sex, and/or sexuality.

In the second week of class, you and a classmate will sign up to give a short, **7-10 minute presentation** that will take place at the beginning of class on the day you select. In your presentation you will want to:

1. Identify and provide a brief description/summary of your media site
2. **Explain this media site’s cultural significance and relevance to course content using at least TWO concepts or theories from your required readings.** That is, I want to see you make a connection between your selected media representation and two concepts or theories discussed by authors in the required readings. To do this well, you will need to identify and define/describe the concepts or theories being used.
3. Offer your very insightful and critical analysis of the topic/materials (FYI: “I thought it was interesting” is neither insightful nor critical)

Make sure to practice! Your verbal presentation should not go over ten minutes, and be ready to answer any questions we might have for you.

**IV. Reflection/Mini-Autoethnography Paper (150 points)**

For this assignment, you will consider the different spaces where you learned about gender, sex, and sexuality in your own life, and how that knowledge has changed (or not) over time. In this paper, you need to situate your own individual experience within the broader cultural and historical contexts in which you have lived. Also, you will want to take into account your unique positioned perspective. For instance, you may have different experiences or knowledge based upon where you grew up, your gender/gender identity, your ethnic or racial background/identity, class position, religious communities, etc. You will use at least **TWO concepts or theories** from assigned class readings to make a connection between your personal experience and academic concepts/theories. This paper should be between 650-750 words.

**V. Archive/Digital Exhibit Project (300 points)**

For your final project, students will locate and research a selection of archival objects related to gender, sex, and/or sexuality using UNT, local, or public online
archives to produce a “digital exhibit.” Archival objects could include but are not limited to news or magazine articles, letters, pamphlets, songs and other recordings, advertisements, material objects, and other ephemera. Students will collect related objects to create a digital exhibit, and will write a narrative description of the exhibit items that a) describes and interprets each chosen item and how they are related to each other and b) provides a cultural and historical context of the items in the exhibit.

The final project will consist of two components:
1. You will select at least five archival objects related to gender, sex, and/or sexuality that will make up your digital exhibit, and
2. You will need to provide an interpretation and analysis of the individual objects as well as the collection in its entirety (i.e. what story do these items tell when they are put together?); length must be at least 1000 words.

As you are developing your interpretation and analysis, you may want to consider the following questions: How do the items in your exhibit create, reproduce, and/or contest cultural meanings about gender, sex, and sexuality? How do these items connect norms about sexuality to other categories of social difference, such as gender, sex, race, ethnicity, class, religion, nationality, indigeneity, etc? What links are being made within the archive between sexual norms and cultural ideas about citizenship, community, or belonging? What might these items tell us about how knowledge about bodies or desires gets produced? What do the items tell us about how power works more generally?

1. **Project Proposal/Preliminary Analysis of One Archival Object (100 points)**
   In order to complete this assignment, you must first find at least one archival object of interest to you. You will turn in a 200-250 word project proposal that includes a preliminary analysis of the archival object, and that elaborates on potential collection themes based on this object. You are not necessarily required to use this object in your final collection; this assignment is meant to encourage you to start thinking about and doing the archival research ahead of time. In your analysis, you should consider the cultural and historical context of the object and offer a preliminary discussion of the significance of the object.

2. **Digital Archive/Exhibit and Analysis (200 points)**
   You will find and collect at least five archival objects that you will use to make up a digital exhibition. In the written interpretation and analysis of your collection, you will analyze each individual object you have selected, as well as the collection as a whole. Your analysis should:
   - Set each object within a particular cultural and historical context
   - Elaborate on the significance, meaning, and/or interpretation of these objects
Discuss how the objects are related (or not)—what is the theme of this collection? Why did you select these items, and how do you think they fit together? When taken together, what kind of story or narrative do they tell?

- Use **two concepts or theories** from our required course readings to consider the cultural meanings and implications of the items and/or your collection as a whole.

*A Note on Paper Formatting:* All papers are to be double spaced, with 12-point font and 1-inch margins on all sides, and should contain a works cited/references page. In-text quotes and references should be properly cited. You may use whichever format you are most familiar with (i.e. MLA, APA, Chicago), but you must be consistent. If you do not know what I am talking about here, please, please, please ask me or check out the UNT writing lab for help.

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to add, delete, or revise segments of the syllabus. Any changes in the course schedule will be announced in class and on the course webpage.

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**IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER**

- Weekly Discussion Questions
- Your Politics of Representation Presentation Date
- 3/2: Reflection/Mini-Autoethnography Paper Due
- 4/6: Project Proposal for Digital Exhibit Project Due
- 5/9: Digital Exhibit and Analysis Projects Due

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Introduction**

1/17: Welcome! No assigned readings

*No discussion question due this week*


*No discussion question due this week*

**Part I- The Social Construction of Gender, Sex, and Sexuality**

2. QGH pgs. 6-18

2. QGH pgs. 27-31, 55-72

3. QGH pgs. 73-83, 144-146

**Part II- Queer(ing) Sexuality, Queer(ing) Anthropology**

2. QGH: pgs. 48-50

2. QGH: pgs. 131-133


2. QGH: pgs. 42-43, 47, 125-130


**Part III- Queer of Color Worldmaking/Interventions in Queer Theory**


3. QGH: pgs. 97-109

*No discussion question due this week*

2. QGH: pgs. 147-156, 164-173

DUE: REFLECTION PAPER/MINI-AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

*No discussion question due this week*

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**Part IV- Queering the Archives?**


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**Part V- Studying Sexuality Across Time and Space**

*The Construction and Reproduction of Euro-American Sexual and Gender Norms, Identities, and Communities*


*No discussion question due this week

Gender and Sexuality in a Cross-Cultural Perspective: Globalizing Forces and Local Lives

*No discussion question due this week

DUE: PROJECT PROPOSAL FOR ARCHIVE/DIGITAL EXHIBIT PROJECT


5/2: Final considerations, informal discussion about final projects
5/9: Digital Exhibit and Analysis Assignments Due

Want more? Here are supplemental sources for you to check out!

Duke University Press.